

Harper County 4-H State Exchange Program

Dear 4-H member and family:

I'm excited to hear you are interested in applying for the 4-H interstate exchange.

Why Have Exchanges?

Exchanges provide opportunities to travel, sightsee, meet new people, make new friends, explore expanding interests, experience how others live and see other 4-H members in action. Exchange programs, properly planned and conducted, can be an important educational experience for 4-H teens. Exchange programs can give youth and chaperones a chance to experience a culture different from their own. All exchange programs should help participants recognize value and celebrate diversity.

What is a County 4-H Exchange?

An Interstate Exchange program is an exciting opportunity for teen age youth. Exchange programs are a series of learning experiences in which individuals from a club, community or county visit in the homes of 4-H members in another geographical area, and are visited by them in return. Counties usually host a group one year and return to visit the homes of their guests the following year.

Age

Exchange participants must be at least age 13 by June 1 of the current year & no older than 19 by January 1 of the current year.

Participant Expectations

- Participants are expected to complete an application and must have a participation form & signed code of conduct form turned into the Extension Office.
- Follow the established guidelines.
- Members & families are expected to participate in the **ALL** of exchange planning & group functions. The process of planning the exchange is as educational as the trip & hosting.
- **Every member is responsible for the cost of the program. The club members may plan fund-raisers. Funds raised will be evenly divided by all club members who participate in each individual fund-raising event. Credit will be given and a**

record will be kept on the amount of money each member has earned.

- Families are encouraged to attend the exchange trip meetings. Family involvement helps ensure a successful exchange experience.
- Delegates and host families must meet established deadlines.
- Participants must represent the 4-H program and are expected to make decisions that demonstrate that they are good representatives for their county and Kansas 4-H Youth Development.
- Delegates unable to travel and families unable to host need to contact their exchange coordinator immediately.
- Kansas youth participants are not allowed to drive other host delegates. Under no circumstances should Kansas youth participants transport other youth.
- Each family member age 19 and over that resides in the host home will be expected to be VIP (Volunteer Information Profile) certified.

Note:

Families should be aware that 4-Hers may be staying with families and hosting youth of various cultural backgrounds including race, religion, sexual orientation, income, lifestyle, age, disability, national origin, and political beliefs.

Traveling (Outbound)

- Correspond with the exchangee and his or her family before the trip.
- Delegates who travel may want to take a small token of appreciation for their host family. Ideally this is something that represents the hometown area or that you have made as a special gift.
- Have fun! This is an opportunity for you to enjoy the richness of another state.
- Know the kids. Do your best to be familiar with names & faces.
- Be pleasant, cooperative & willing to try new experiences.
- Respect adult supervision at all times.
- Abide by the 4-H Policy Guidelines
- Respect all facilities, property of others and natural surroundings.

Hosting (Inbound)

- The host 4-H group has a major responsibility in planning to meet the interests of visiting delegates and providing worthwhile experiences for host families.
 - While hosting, you will be required to make your home a welcoming, clean and comfortable environment.
 - Delegates should be treated as a member of the host family.
 - Be expected to treat the exchangee as a family member. The exchangee will be included in all family activities. We will make every effort to make sure the exchangee feels comfortable around friends and feels included.
 - Make time for the whole family to be together and take part in the countywide activities arranged as part of the exchange trip.
 - Make the exchange program a positive experience for the exchangee.
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- As a host, you are expected to participate in all group activities with your exchange delegate. If for some unusual circumstance you are unable to participate in a group event, your delegate must still participate.
 - Hosts must provide reliable & safe transportation to and from all planned activities.
 - Provide supervision for their own and the youth they are hosting.
 - Be on time to all activities.
 - The visit should include some touring to local points of interest that will contribute to meeting the objectives of the exchange. (Remember, the visiting delegates may already have traveled a long distance.) When possible, keep hosts with delegates for these experiences.
 - Consider holding a service project that the

delegates could do together. This helps the delegates gain an understanding of the community.

- Let the community know the 4-H'ers are coming. Contact local newspapers, radio, television stations and other news media. Explain the purpose of the exchange. Make the group feel welcome.
- Token packages are a way to welcome an exchange delegate into your county. The package could include tokens representing businesses or industries in your area (for example, promotional items). Many businesses will donate these products.
- To evaluate the exchange, ask host families and 4-H'ers to comment on their experiences and ways to improve the program. Consider holding a debriefing session.

Things the Delegates Can Do To Get Ready

This is a chance for the 4-H exchange participants to learn more about your hometown, county and state. Help them to be prepared to tell the family they are visiting or the 4-H'ers they are hosting about the people, industry, agriculture, geography, government, natural resources, schools and 4-H program where you live. Each person may wish to prepare a photo album to share his or her story. The 4-H'ers could e-mail or write to their host family to tell them more about themselves. The delegates should learn about the area they are visiting or from which they are hosting visitors. What are some similarities and differences between the two areas? The "State Savvy Portfolio for Exchange Trips" (see Appendix 9 on pg. 23) is designed to help the delegation do this. Libraries and the Internet are excellent sources of information for your research!